

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing multi-tiered broadcasting services to subscribers, comprising the steps of:

broadcasting primary content over one or more primary content channels;

broadcasting secondary content over one or more secondary-content channels;

enabling reception of a first tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers subscribing to said first tier receive only said primary content; and

enabling reception of a second tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers subscribing to said second tier receive both said primary content and said secondary content;

requiring that second tier subscribers play at least a portion of said secondary content before being able to play said primary content;

tracking how much of said secondary content has been played by said second tier subscriber; and

discontinuing the requirement that said second tier subscribers play back said secondary content upon the occurrence of a first predetermined triggering event.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said primary content comprises substantive programming content and said secondary content comprises promotional content.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said promotional content comprises commercial advertising.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with at least one secondary-content channel.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with a different secondary content channel.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with the same secondary content channel.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said same secondary-content channel is part of a service channel serving all of said primary content channels.

8-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[9]] 1, wherein said first predetermined triggering event comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said secondary content.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[9]] 1, further comprising the step of:
reinstating the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back said secondary content upon the occurrence of a second predetermined triggering event.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said second predetermined triggering event comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said primary content.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said second predetermined triggering event comprises the changing from one primary content channel to another primary content channel by a second-tier subscriber.

14. (Currently Amended) A system for providing multi-tiered broadcasting services to subscribers, comprising:

means for broadcasting primary content over one or more primary content channels;

means for broadcasting secondary content over one or more secondary-content channels;

means for enabling reception of a first tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers subscribing to said first tier receive only said primary content; ~~and~~

means for enabling reception of a second tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers subscribing to said second tier receive both said primary content and said secondary content;

means for requiring that second tier subscribers play at least a portion of said secondary content before being able to play said primary content;

means for tracking how much of said secondary content has been played by said second-tier subscriber; and

means for discontinuing the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back said secondary content upon the occurrence of a first predetermined triggering event.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein said primary content comprises substantive programming content and said secondary content comprises promotional content.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein said promotional content comprises commercial advertising.

17. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with at least one secondary-content channel.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with a different secondary content channel.

19. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with the same secondary content channel.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein said same secondary-content channel is part of a service channel serving all of said primary content channels.

21-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[22]] 14, wherein said first predetermined triggering event comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said secondary content.

24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~[[22]]~~ 14, further comprising:
means for reinstating the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back said secondary content upon the occurrence of a second predetermined triggering event.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said second predetermined triggering event comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said primary content.

26. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said second predetermined triggering event comprises the changing from one primary content channel to another primary content channel by a second-tier subscriber.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for providing multi-tiered broadcasting services to subscribers, comprising a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code embodied in the medium, the computer-readable program code comprising:

computer-readable program code that controls the broadcasting of primary content over one or more primary content channels;

computer-readable program code that controls the broadcasting of secondary content over one or more secondary-content channels;

computer-readable program code that enables reception of a first tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers subscribing to said first tier receive only said primary content; and

computer-readable program code that enables reception of a second tier broadcasting

service whereby subscribers subscribing to said second tier receive both said primary content and said secondary content;

computer-readable program code that requires second tier subscribers to play at least a portion of said secondary content before being able to play said primary content;

computer-readable program code that requires tracks how much of said secondary content has been played by said second tier subscriber; and

computer-readable program code that controls the discontinuing of the requirement that said second tier subscribers play back said secondary content upon the occurrence of a first predetermined triggering event.

28. (Original) The computer program product of claim 27, wherein said primary content comprises substantive programming content and said secondary content comprises promotional content.

29. (Original) The computer program product of claim 28, wherein said promotional content comprises commercial advertising.

30. (Original) The computer program product of claim 27, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with at least one secondary-content channel.

31. (Original) The computer program product of claim 30, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with a different secondary content channel.

32. (Original) The computer program product of claim 30, wherein each of said primary content channels is associated with the same secondary content channel.

33. (Original) The computer program product of claim 32, wherein said same secondary-content channel is part of a service channel serving all of said primary content channels.